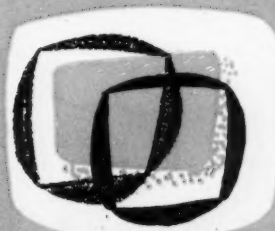
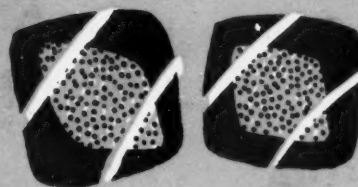
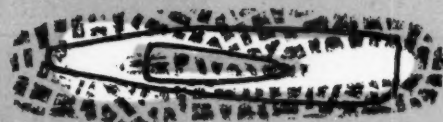


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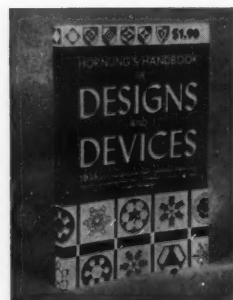
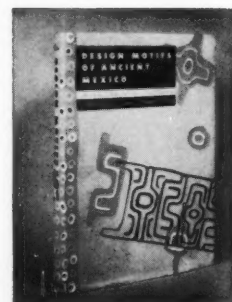
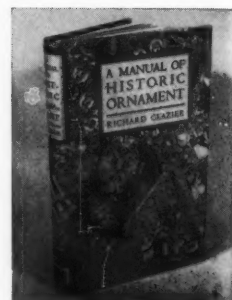
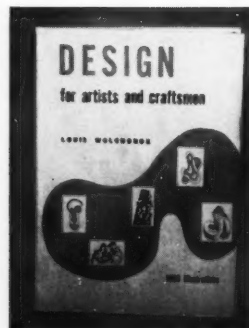
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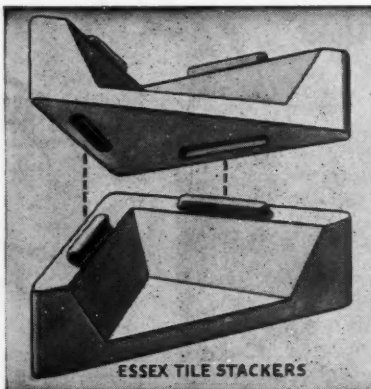
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CERAMICS MONTHLY

Ceramics MONTHLY

Volume 3, Number 6

JUNE • 1955

50 cents per copy

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Ceramics Monthly is published each month at the Lawhead Press, Inc., Athens, Ohio, by Professional Publications, Inc., S. L. Davis, President and Treasurer; L. G. Farber, Vice President; P. S. Emery, Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE in U.S.A. and Possessions: one year, \$4; two years, \$7; three years, \$9. Canada and Pan America, 50 cents a year additional; foreign, add \$1 a year. Current issues, 50c; back issues, 60c.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE (advertising, subscriptions, editorial) should be sent to the editorial offices at 4175 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Athens, Ohio, as granted under Authority of the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1955 by Professional Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.



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letters

HELP COMING

Gentlemen:

I want to thank you very sincerely for the mention you made of me and the project I am undertaking regarding the organization of an artist-craftsman group in Michigan [CERAM-ACTIVITIES, April]. . . .

I am getting some very interesting results from my correspondence. Some are very negative and some highly positive. The response has been slow, but the article you printed has obtained some help for me from someone right in my own vicinity and so things are bound to speed up. Thank you again . . .

G. LAWRENCE JELF
Lincoln Park, Mich.

♦ *Michigan readers note: Jelf's address, in case you missed it, is 2163 Champaign, Lincoln Park, Michigan.—Ed.*

TIT FOR TAT

Gentlemen:

Enclosed please find an article and photographs based on a successful ceramic project completed at our school. We hope you find it of enough interest to be included in one of your issues.

It can be considered a small return for the many suggestions and the stimulation our students receive from your magazine. CERAMICS MONTHLY is a fine supplement to the many books on ceramics. It keeps

us up-to-date on activities and new ideas . . .

WILLIAM LITTLE
Maryvale School System
Cheektowaga, N. Y.

♦ *CM welcomes Art Director Little's contribution (watch for it in a coming issue). The orchid is nice, too!—Ed.*

ALWAYS SOMETHING

Gentlemen:

. . . Time to renew my subscription so here it is . . .

Each month I receive help from [the magazine]. Not all articles have equal appeal but there is always something. I am constantly referring to articles in CM to help me in my work—a new venture—with a pottery class.

MARTHA J. RYAN
Windsor, Nova Scotia

PEAK FOR PINK

Gentlemen:

. . . I particularly enjoyed the [May] cover which I think is the nicest you have had to date. My better half and I were discussing the *shocking pink color* which he insisted was aimed specifically at your female readership and would not be well received by men. The May 2 issue of *Life* magazine helped me convince him CM was on the ball and that he was old-fashioned. In it was a feature article titled "The Peak Year for Pink. Traditional feminine color becomes a staple for male." . . .

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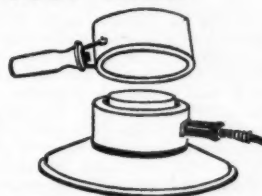
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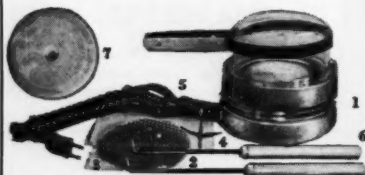
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itinerary

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WHERE TO SHOW

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CALIFORNIA, Sacramento

July

Annual Exhibition Northern California Graphic and Decorative Arts at California State Library. Crafts included; awards; jury. Exhibit blanks and entries due June 16-17. Write Alicia M. Hook, c/o Library, Capitol Ave., Sacramento 9.

INDIANA, Indianapolis

August 31-September 9

Indiana State Fair Ceramics Exhibit. Entries due by Aug. 10; fee. Write Director of the fair for book of regulations.

LOUISIANA, Baton Rouge

Sept. 11-Oct. 2

La. State Art Commission 14th Annual Art Exhibition. For state's artists and ceramists. Jury; prizes. No fee. Cards and work due Sept. 2. For details: Jay R. Broussard, dir., La. Art Comm., Old State Capitol.

MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

October 15-November 27

Individuals may submit objects to committee of selection; for details write Mrs. Walter Kring, 40 Highland St.

NEW MEXICO, Santa Fe

August 21-Sept. 30

42nd Open-Door Exhibition (The Fiesta Show) at the Museum of New Mexico Art Gallery. For N.M., artists and includes crafts. No jury; no fee. Entry blanks due July 9; work, July 30. Write Dorothy Morang at the Museum.

TEXAS, San Antonio

Oct. 9

Annual River Art Show concurrent with Arneson River Theatre Competition. Apply for free display space before June 15—Evelyn Bond, River Art Group, 509 Villita St.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Sept. 1-23

Fifth Biennial Exhibition of Ceramic Art sponsored by Kiln Club of Washington and Smithsonian Institution—National Collection of Fine Arts. Includes foreign entries, invited American entries, and a juried section for artists residing in the District, Maryland and Virginia. Third section work due Aug. 19. For details: George Beishlag, chairman, 2044 Ft. Davis St., S.E., Washington, D. C.

WHERE TO GO

ALABAMA, Birmingham

July 5-26

At Museum of Art—85 pieces from Third Annual Ceramic Exhibition sponsored by Ceramic League of Miami.

CALIFORNIA, Carmel

July 23-24

Crafts-in-the-Making show at outdoor Forest Theater. Carmel Craft Guild members demonstrate and exhibit work.

CALIFORNIA, Long Beach

opening July 10

California Designed exhibition of objects and furnishings for the home. At Long Beach Art Center, 2300 East Ocean Blvd. (See also San Francisco.)

CALIFORNIA, Sacramento

through June 26

Kingsley Art Club 30th Annual Exhibition of arts and crafts at E. B. Crocker Art Gallery.

CALIFORNIA, San Francisco

opening July 10

California Designed exhibition of objects and furnishings for the home. At De Young Museum.

CANADA, Toronto

through June 22

Designer-Craftsmen USA., at Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology. More than 200 handcrafted objects by contemporary Americans.

COLORADO, Denver

June 15-August 1

Sixty-first Annual Exhibition for Western Artists at the Denver Art Museum includes crafts.

CONNECTICUT, Norwalk

June 12-July 10

6th Annual New England Show at Silvermine Guild of Artists includes ceramic sculpture.

FLORIDA, West Palm Beach

through June 20

At Norton Gallery—85 pieces from Third Annual Ceramic Exhibition sponsored by Ceramic League of Miami.

FRANCE, Cannes

through August 1

Masterpieces of Modern Ceramics representing all countries on the Continent, also U.S., Mexico, Brazil, Turkey and Egypt. At Palais des Festivals.

INDIANA, Indianapolis

through June 12

Third Biennial Indiana Ceramic Exhibition at the John Herron Art Museum.

KENTUCKY, Louisville

July 6-27

Pre-Columbian art. 80 examples. At J. B. Speed Museum.

MICHIGAN, Detroit

through June 14

Design in Scandinavia. Over 700 mass-produced and handcrafted items selected by top Scandinavian designers. At Detroit Institute of Arts.

MINNESOTA, Duluth

July 15-August 15

Italian Arts and Crafts (contemporary)

(Please turn to Page 28)

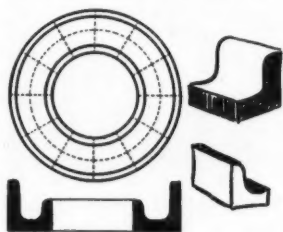
suggestions

from our readers

THROWN TEST TILES

A series of useful test tiles can be made as follows.

After centering the lump of clay on the potter's wheel, start to open as you would for a plate or shallow dish and bring the wall up as high as you want the test surface to be. Next, raise an inner wall 1½ to 2 inches from the outer one by using up the clay from the center. Cut through the bottom of the U-profiled ring midway between the walls and sever the center from the in-



ner wall. Now cut each of the L-profiled rings into appropriate segments and mark off subdivisions. (The cutting is indicated by the dash line in the sketch).

Such a series of test tiles is very useful for testing variations of a given glaze. The L-profile is practical for testing the running of a glaze. A code number on the back of each sample identifies it with the glaze.

—Hermine Secretan
Washington, D. C.

SPRIGGING IDEA

I do a great deal of work with cast green ware and particularly enjoy sprigging on clay shapes such as leaves, flowers, and so forth. It is difficult to make the fresh clay pieces stick to the bone-dry green ware even with the excellent attaching mediums available on the market. The bone-dry green ware dries the attaching medium before it has a chance to get a foothold.

One of the easiest remedies is to pour the lining glaze

immediately before attempting to sprig on the clay pieces. The entire piece becomes uniformly damp and the pieces adhere to the outside without any difficulty.

—Milda Troeschler
Cleveland, Ohio

FOR DRY FEET

To keep glaze from running onto the base of a piece during firing, rub finely ground charcoal on the foot and base and set the piece on a kiln shelf which has been sprinkled with dry flint.

—Hilda Wheatley
W. Hempstead, N. Y.

EYES HAVE IT

I have found that working with the very tiny, screw-eye findings for drop earrings can be most tedious at times. Having ten thumbs instead of fingers, I spend most of the time hunting for the screw eyes on the floor. They are extremely hard to find because they are so small.

As an aid, I thread the eye that I am using on a paper clip. It leaves the eye loose to work with but attached to something much easier to find if dropped. It is a simple matter to detach the paper clip when the eye is set in place.

—George Pauly
Inglewood, Calif.

EMBOSSED PAINTING AID

When painting designs in color on pieces which have the designs embossed, I find it a timesaver if I first go over the raised part which is to be painted with a light pencil line. In some of the embossed designs it is sometimes difficult to tell where to paint and what to leave bare, and it is exasperating as well as time consuming to correct errors in such detailed painting. The pencil lines will fire out leaving no blemishes.

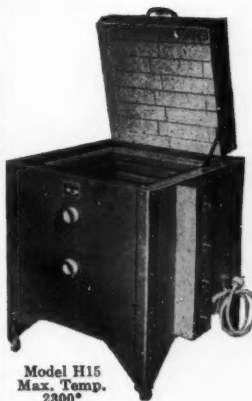
—Carmen Barker
Abilene, Tex.

Market for Ideas

Send your bright ideas to *Ceramics Monthly*—with photos or sketches, if acceptable. We pay \$1 to \$5 for suggestions used in this column. (Sorry, but we can't acknowledge or return unused items.)

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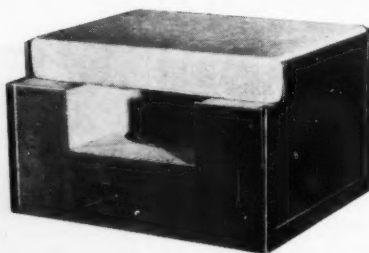
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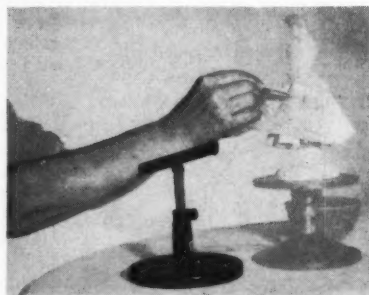
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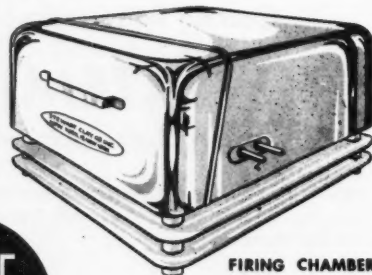
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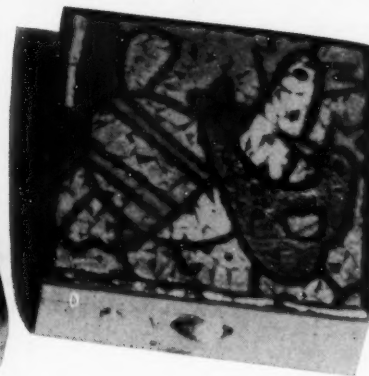
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CERAMICS MONTHLY



scrap pieces of foil salvaged for effective use in enamel designing. how the technique works is told here with examples of the author's work illustrating the text.



Jo Rebert ENAMELS jewelry and accessories with bits of foil

The art of enameling jewelry and related accessories is different from working with bowls and trays. Now, for the most part, you are working with very small items, with segments and even the finished piece itself sometimes so small they have to be handled with tweezers. This is a type of enameling that calls for most careful craftsmanship and strict observation of rules.

A tiny speck of dirt, which might not be noticeable on a plaque or ash tray, for example, can be embarrassingly conspicuous on a small earring. Edges and other areas of bare metal must be highly finished. Fine lines and detail must be particularly neat. Even the backs of pieces must be treated with considerable care for the backs often show as in the case of drop earrings; both design and color should relate to the front. That is why you choose the counterenamel with care, usually using ordinary commercial sludge only when it is to be a first application under a transparent color.

But whether you are designing tiny jewelry or huge panels, the fundamentals of good enameling remain the same. And because this is so, it would be well for the inexperienced to review carefully the basic principles of the art. The series of articles by Jean O'Hara which appeared in CERAMICS MONTHLY (June, July, August, September, October, December 1954) as well as her current column are particularly recommended as a refresher course.

When it comes to enameling techniques for jewelry, one of my favorites is designing with bits of metallic foil. It offers a wide variety of design possibilities, and it's a wonderful way to use up all the tiny scraps of foil that every enamelist accumulates.

But before taking up the technique in detail, let me suggest that you pay particular attention to the cleanliness of your enamels for you will find the precaution especially

worthwhile when you work on jewelry. *Be sure the enamels are washed clean and kept clean.* As you work, constantly watch for and pick out unwanted specks with a pointed damp brush. (I actually use a small magnifying glass for final checkup on a piece before firing). Remember that no amount of washing is an absolute guarantee that no undesirable specks remain in enamels.

Counterenameling is an important factor, too. Even the smallest item may crack if it is not counterenameled; and this is particularly true if you are using transparent enamels some of which tend to crack. If a finding is to be soldered to the back, you have to leave a small bare spot on the metal; but if the finding is a long or large one as in the case of clips or pins, it is better to leave a small blank spot close to either end of the piece rather than a long, bare strip to accommodate the entire finding. The spots give you enough area for good soldering and holding of the finding, and you do not run the risk of cracking on the face of the piece as is the case when a wide area on the back is left unenameled. Before the counterenamel is fired, the edges and face of the piece should be wiped

INTRODUCING Jo Rebert who, it's apparent, enjoys making and wearing enamels. This article is one of many to come in her series on jewelry and related items. See Ceram - Activities, page 33, for more about J. R.





SIMPLE but effective use of the bits-of-foil technique can be seen here in this enameled set of cuff links and tie pin.



clean and holes in the piece (if any) cleaned out. Counterenameled should *always be slightly underfired*. It should come out of the kiln shiny and fused together but not quite smooth. Knowing the correct maturing degree for the counterenameled used is important because, if it isn't fired enough, it can crack off later; and if overfired initially, it can burn off in subsequent firings.

A word about the preparation of the metal: here, too, cleanliness is a virtue. The metal should be perfectly clean, and ordinarily either acid or copper cleaner will do a satisfactory job. I prefer cleaning in acid which I always follow with a good rubbing with fine steel wool and a drop of detergent. Once the piece is thoroughly rinsed in hot water and dried with a linen towel, it is not touched again with bare fingers.

As for the bits-of-foil technique, the procedure in general is the same as when regular metallic foil is used. It is always applied to a pre-fired enameled surface, and always covered with a transparent enamel. For a demonstration of how the odds and ends of leftover foil may be utilized in enameling jewelry (or other work), a simple copper shape has been selected. The following text and related photos take us through the steps.

1. Small pieces of scrap foil are sandwiched between two surfaces of tracing paper—not too close to the folded edge, so that you have a place to hold onto while cutting.

2. Using small scissors, you make a series of parallel cuts about 1/16-inch apart, the spacing depending on the

texture you want to achieve. Then you cut across the initial cuts at any angle you wish; if appropriate for your design plan, a variety of sizes may be cut. Only a small area should be cut at a time; otherwise, the pieces of foil tend to fall out. The bits of foil and paper drop on a clean surface, preferably a sheet of hard-finished paper; and are separated occasionally with a soft, fluffy brush.

3. The copper shape on which we apply the foil has been counterenameled and the face is coated with a fired soft or medium fusing enamel (I prefer medium flux, especially if the design calls for many firings because the soft flux tends to burn out making the foil less brilliant). The enameled face has been thoroughly washed and dried to remove fingerprints and foreign matter. The area to be covered with foil—the entire face in this case—is covered with an agar solution about as thick as glue. (The solution is made by boiling agar and letting it stand overnight. I strain a small amount through a nylon stocking into a small jar and label it "brushing agar." The remaining solution can be thinned down for spraying.)

Bits of foil are picked up on the end of a wet brush and laid on the agar-covered piece. They may be spaced close together, far apart or overlapped in accordance with the designing plan you have in mind; and different textures can be achieved with a little experimenting. The area you are covering with foil must be kept moist with agar until it is completely covered. Then the entire surface is pressed gently with absorbent tissue or a clean cloth to squeeze out all the excess moisture and air which has collected under the foil. (Otherwise, the agar can boil under-

1. Scraps of foil are sandwiched in folded tracing paper.

2. Paper with foil inside is cut in tiny bits, a small section at a time.

3. Bits of foil are placed on agar-covered, pre-enameled metal shape.



Further details relating to the designing and enameling of the pieces shown at left, far left and right, are given on page 27 of this issue.

VARIATION of technique presented in this article is shown in earrings. Brilliant jewel quality was obtained by using foil in such a way that it not only hugs the base coat of enamel but floats in and rides on the surface of a rather thick covering coat.



MORE INTRICATE designing went into the men's jewelry (above), producing pieces of great depth and brilliance, and a wonderful play of color.

neath the foil and raise it off the enameled surface during firing.)

4. When the piece has been allowed to dry completely, it is set on a trivet where it is supported only at the edges, and placed in the enameling kiln for about two minutes at a temperature between 1350° and 1400° (assuming the foil is silver—gold foil takes longer and can withstand more heat). The piece, when removed from the kiln and while still hot, is burnished on the face with a burnishing tool, or even a kitchen knife. This burnishing presses out air bubbles that accumulate during firing and permits the foil to adhere to the soft enamel.

If not sufficiently heated, the small bits of foil have a tendency to fly off the surface. Several heatings and burnishings, are, therefore, usually required; but on each subsequent reheating, the piece should be left in the kiln for only a minute or so. Because of the first heating, less time is required thereafter for softening the enamel and foil enough to make it possible to press out air bubbles. Over-firing gives the foil a permanently bumpy texture. (If this happens, I would go ahead with the piece, however, because the foil seldom gives trouble unless many firings follow in which case it might boil up several firings later.)

During the firing process, it is a good idea to keep a few extra bits of foil handy. If a bit comes off the piece you are working on, you can replace it and reheat for further burnishing. If the surface is flat, no additional agar is needed. But if the surface is curved, you have to go through the initial process of applying foil—cool the

piece, brush with agar, apply the replacement bits, dry thoroughly—then refire and burnish.

5. When the foil is fired into the enamel and adheres tightly to the surface, it looks perfectly smooth and does not show marks when scratched with a tool. Now you can proceed with further designing if your plans call for it. For the simplified piece used here, however, the only additional enameling is an overall coat of transparent. It is dusted on by the familiar sifting process with care taken to keep the final coat rather thin. Too heavy a coating results in cloudy color, or even complete loss of transparency. If, after a thin application is fired, more color is wanted, another thin coat of the enamel is added and fired.

6. The last and final firing of the piece is followed by a careful stoning of the edges; and then the findings may be attached with either solder or jewelry cement.

In this demonstration piece, the bits of foil constitute the entire design but we could have gone much further. As suggested earlier, metallic foil scraps offer wide possibilities in enameling jewelry and accessories. They can be incorporated effectively as part of, or as the background, of more intricate design. Additional colors, shading, fine lines and other finishing details can be added. Some of the possibilities are to be seen in the jewelry shown on these pages, and others will be suggested by the wide variety of designs and techniques to be covered in detail in subsequent articles of this series. ●

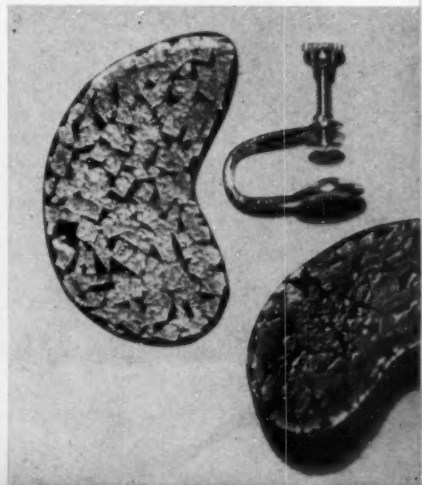
4. The foil application receives several firings and burnishings.



5. Last touch is overall coating of transparent enamel, dusted on.



6. After final firing, piece is stoned, and the findings are cemented on.





Strictly for Amateurs

MIX YOUR OWN GLAZES

by SALLY GALLAWAY

Leave molecular equivalents to the experts and try the simple, non-technical method of mixing glazes. Kitchen utensils and a nylon stocking are all the working equipment you need!

A ceramics teacher may cringe visibly when a novice naively expresses a desire to learn to make glazes. The teachers visualize years of study in chemistry and physics . . . the vast complexity of reactions of one element on another . . . the endless experiments . . . the equipment needed.

But fools rush in, and, eager in our ignorance, we come out with some heavenly glazes. *Try it yourself!* You don't need special knowledge or equipment if you start with a glaze frit, add a little clay, some gum as a binder and suspending agent, and either prepared underglaze or pure oxides for coloring.

A ceramic glaze frit consists of glaze ingredients which have been meticulously compounded, melted into glass and then ground back into powder form. Some frits constitute an entire glaze, which means that all you need do to use them is add a little clay and gum solution. Three such frits are among the glazes in my chart below.

No scales! No ball mill! Begin with simple volume measurements and an easy mixing method. You won't duplicate commercial glazes this way, and every batch you make won't be exactly the same. But you'll have the pleasure of completing a piece with your own individual glaze.

Glaze Chart Cone 06-05

Quantities specified are to be used with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gum solution, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup desired frit, and 4 teaspoons kaolin. This makes approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ pound glaze, or about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup liquid glaze.

(Liquid underglaze color is represented by the abbreviation u.g. The frits are designated, for convenience only, as A and B and C. All measurements are level.)

Transparent

Frit A, B or C.

Opaque White

Frit A, B or C, plus 4 tsp. zircopax

Speckled Yellow

Frit C, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. red iron oxide and 2 tsp. yellow u.g.

Sandstone Brown

Frit C, plus 1 tsp. red iron oxide and 1 tsp. manganese carbonate

Silver Green

Frit C, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. titanium dioxide and 1 tsp. copper oxide

Blue Green

Frit A, plus 2 tsp. copper carbonate

Mauve

Frit A, plus 1 tsp. blue u.g., and 1 tsp. maroon u.g.

Opaque Green

Frit B, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. chromium oxide

Dark Gray

Frit B, plus 4 tsp. zircopax and 2 tsp. black u.g.

Sky Blue

Frit B, plus 2 tsp. blue u.g.

Dark Green Luster

Frit B, plus 2 tsp. copper oxide

You'll need to buy some or all of the following materials. Prices range, by the pound, from about 25 cents for gum to about 75 cents for certain oxides; in larger quantities, even less.

- 1 oz. gum tragacanth
- 1 or 2 lbs. Frits A, B and C
- 1 lb. chromium oxide
- 1 lb. copper carbonate
- 1 lb. copper oxide
- 1 lb. manganese carbonate
- 1 lb. red iron oxide
- 1 lb. zircopax
- 1 lb. titanium dioxide (rutile)
- Liquid underglaze colors
- 1 lb. kaolin

Glaze frits are made by several manufacturers including Pemco Corporation, Baltimore; Ferro Corporation, Cleveland; and O. Hommel Co., Pittsburgh. And you will find that most local suppliers carry a line of frits and other glaze-making materials.

Frit A — Alkaline Frit (leadless). (Ferro #3124). Especially good on red clay. Apply medium coating.

Frit B — Borosilicate Frit (leadless). (Ferro #3195.) Bubbles in firing, breaking through and misting any glaze or decoration applied on top of it. Non-flowing (except when large amounts of copper or other fluxes are added) so may be used for incised glaze decoration. Apply medium to heavy coating.

Frit C — Lead Frit. (Ferro #3417.) A good flowing glaze. Apply a medium coating.

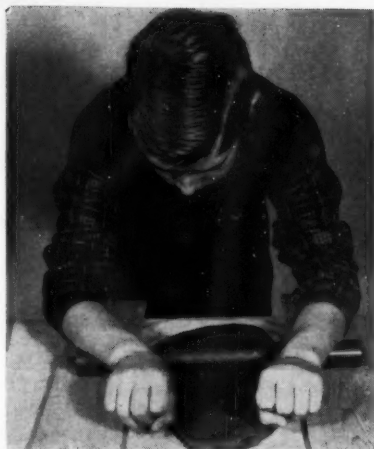
How to mix glazes (the easy way): Put $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gum solution (recipe p. 28) in a glass mixing bowl. Add coloring oxide and/or liquid underglaze and mix well. Measure and mix together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup desired frit and 4 teaspoons kaolin, and add to gum mixture. Stir, adding just enough water to make a smooth mixture about the consistency of heavy cream. Strain through nylon stocking into clean, labelled jar. Do not force unstrained residue through stocking.

How to use: All these glazes may be applied on green ware or bisque by brushing, pouring, spraying or dipping. If the glaze is too thin for the desired method of application, allow to settle for several hours, then pour off water remaining on the top. Always stir the glaze well before using, and if lumpy, strain it again through a stocking. Apply a medium-to-heavy

(Please turn to Page 28)

How to Catch a Fish

by PHIL ALLEN



A creature of the deep emerges under Gary's hands. It's a fish (obviously) formed from one piece of clay.

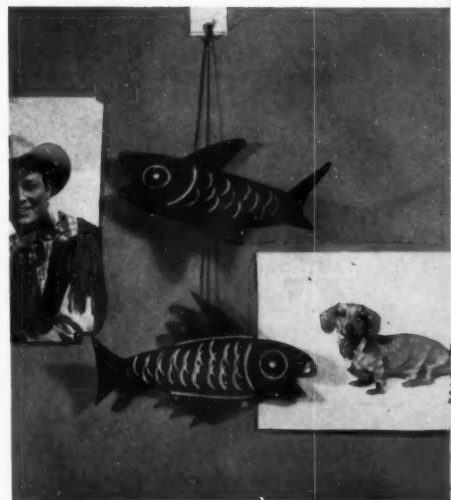
1. The boy rolls out a slab of clay with a platen from a discarded, large-sized typewriter. It makes a wonderfully effective rolling pin. Using his forearms instead of his hands for extra strength, he leans well over the table letting his shoulder muscles do the work.

2. The fish shape, with a paper pattern as the guide, is cut from the slab with Mom's kitchen knife.

3. A bottle cap, jar lid and pencil are brought into play. Gary uses them to impress scales, gill and eye.

4. A flat fish would be — well, rather flat. So the young modeler gives the form *movement* by bending it gently upward. Small wads of clay act as props to keep the soft form from sagging. Since he plans to hang the fish in his room, Gary drills a small hole in one fin to accommodate cord. Now the work is left to dry until leather hard.

5. When the piece is dry, he decorates with light-colored slip (it will make a bold contrast, for the clay is the type that fires red). He brushes the slip in and around the depressions



made earlier; and, whether he knows it or not, the decorating technique he employs is called *mishima*.

6. Excess slip is scraped away, leaving only the depressions filled. Now the piece is ready to be covered with clear glaze and fired.

Gary likes his fish in pairs so he made two of them with slight variations in shape and decoration. Hanging in his room at home (above), they are prized at least as highly as the photos of his favorite friends. ●



VARIATIONS on wheel-thrown pottery

by AARON BOHRD and
F. CARLTON BALL

**ADVENTURING WITH WHEEL-THROWN SHAPES,
AUTHORS CREATE UNIQUE FREE FORMS SOME
OF WHICH ARE SHOWN ON THESE PAGES.**

No potter made of proper clay ever *really* tires of the basic wheel-thrown form. The endless variety of shape which is a potential of the wheel precludes any possibility that this staple of the potter's art will reach—with a real artist—even a remote point of satiety. And furthered as the basic pot can be through related decoration, the possibilities of expression are infinite.

There do come times, however, when a potter feels the need for an extra dash of spice in his stew. He may sometimes experience the desire to depart temporarily from the standard symmetrical bill of fare and explore regions less securely tied to the wheel's revolutions. The hand-built form is one avenue of approach to that kind of exploration and the wheel-derived "free form" is another path.

After his periods of experimentation the artist returns to the pure product. But in the meantime he has had his fun. He has learned to play by ear. Playing with the un-

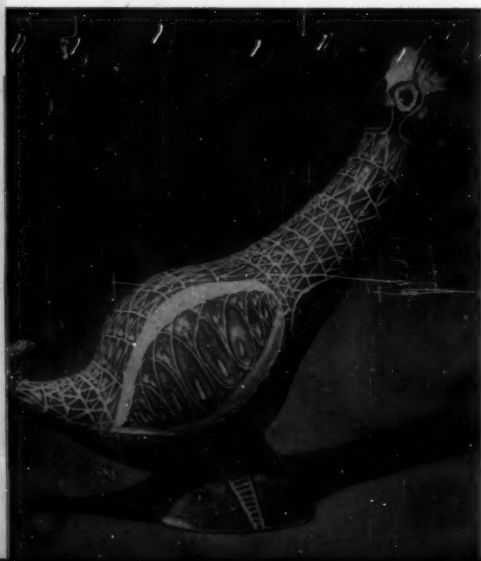
*The authors are a well-known potter-artist team. See CERAM-
ACTIVITIES, page 33.*



usual shape tends, undoubtedly, to develop the creativity of the potter. In decoration he has an asymmetrical structure and surface to base his work on, and this evokes a special challenge with correspondingly acute inventive responses.

In the wheel-based, free-form adventure he lets his imagination roam. When he returns to the straight and narrow once more the lessons he has taught himself somehow make the path even straighter—but much less narrow. He has added a new dimension to his growth as a potter. While charming himself with the fantasy he has caused to flow he may also have made friends for pottery by beguiling the layman who might not deign to bestow interest on an "ordinary" geometric pot. Once having captured the layman's attention it might be easier to demonstrate the beauty that may lie in the simple, wheel-thrown product.

Perhaps at this late date it is too much to expect that absolutely new pottery forms can be introduced into the long history of pottery. This would not be an inconceivable accomplishment but if it did come about it would prob-



I Duck bottles (13½" & 15" H) start with a thrown shape (A). The top is bent in a curve (B). The tail (C) and base (D)



are thrown separately, and the several parts assembled with slip. Details on the forming and decorating are given in the text.

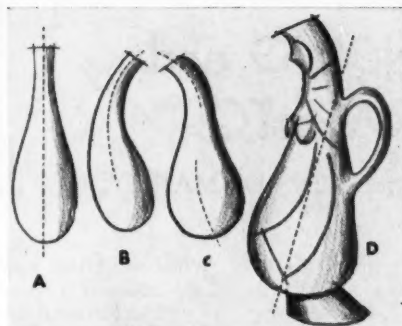
ably be the result of happy accident rather than of deliberate intention. Straining for *total* originality of this kind would not be healthy or nearly as important as the smaller and more certain possibilities of contributing a personal variant and personal expression through off-beat work. As in all creative art effort each small success leads to much more success and much richer variety.

As he works in the direction of altering and distorting wheel-thrown forms—combining, adding, twisting and pushing them into shape—the artist is almost inevitably led to the age-old effigy pot. Old as the idea is, results can yet be as fresh as the product of the first artist among the ancients who thought of it. In this genre, fantasy can be allowed full play compatible with tenets of good taste and fine structure. Special problems of balance for the decorative container-pot enlarge the challenge to the artist so that successful solution brings especially great satisfaction.

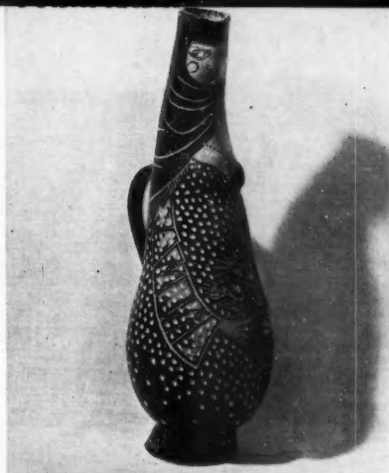
1. As first examples of the effigy pot, two variations of a bird bottle created by the authors are submitted here (opposite page). As can readily be guessed the principal form was first thrown as a tall bottle (A). While the clay was very wet the top of the bottle was bent over as far as it would go without splitting on the stretched side or buckling on its opposite side (B). The tail of the bird was thrown separately as a hollow cone (C) and again this portion was shaped immediately after throwing. When the several pieces were leather hard they were joined together with clay slip after the tail was carved to fit over the bottle.

The base was thrown as a third entity (D). When leather hard, the top of this portion was carved to fit the body of the bottle and attached securely with slip. Then the foot of the base was cut at an angle in such manner that balance was attained.

The assembled bottle was detailed with carving of the beak and applied buttons of clay for eyes. In the one case (bird at left), it was sprayed overall with a clay slip containing 10 per cent of red iron oxide. Varied sgraffito lines and gouged out areas completed the decoration. A tin enamel glaze allowed portions of the slip color to bleed through for a rather rich effect



2 Lady bottle (18" H) evolved after a tall shape (A) was bent in an "S" curve (B & C). One side tended to straighten out suggesting a female figure



so the tendency was exploited thereafter (D). And when the neck of the pot twisted in drying, the decorator went along with it by giving the woman her sidelong glance.

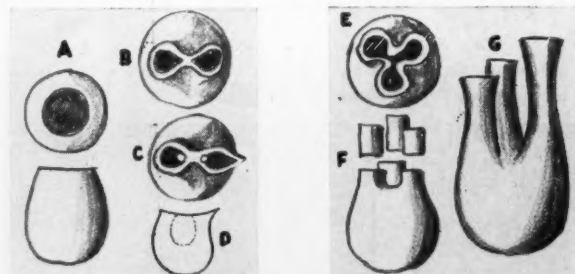
while glaze runs filled the incisions with more opaque white.

In the second version of the bird, the pot was first bisque and sprayed with a semi-opaque matt glaze. Over the unfired glaze coating were applied metallic oxide and underglaze notes of mazarine blue, red brown and black with touches of vanadium yellow and copper carbonate. Firing to cone 7 kept the color subtle and integrated with the clay body. It avoided the painty look of most earthenware and some stoneware. On these objects, the crook of the tail offers a prop for the thumb and for leverage when pouring liquids from the bottle.

2. The original intention of the next work was to give a tall narrow bottle (A) an S curve by reversing the single direction curve which was applied to a similar bottle for the bird pot. The first bend (B) was easily accomplished and was of course successful, but the reverse bend (C) tended to straighten out one side of the initial curve. The result was suggestive of a female figure. This tendency was immediately exploited (D). The spout was stretched out to improve pouring and to give a mantilla-like impression to the top of the head. Breasts were formed by pushing the wet clay out from within the bottle. This was effected by inserting the end of a wooden clothes hangar through the opening at the top and applying a gentle rolling pressure. The face was similarly forced forward and a pat of clay was tipped on to form a not-very-protruding nose.

The bottom of the pot was trimmed full round to make it more easily fit the collared base which was thrown separately and attached with slip in the usual manner. To accentuate the

(Please turn to Page 24)



3 Two-member pitcher (12" H) from a single pot (A): side walls pushed together in the top section (B) and rolls of clay inserted (C) created a partially double wall which, when cut (D), left two members standing free. Chicken pitcher (opp. page) was made the same way. Cloverleaf fold (E) is a variation yielding three necks (F) to which cylinders are added (G).



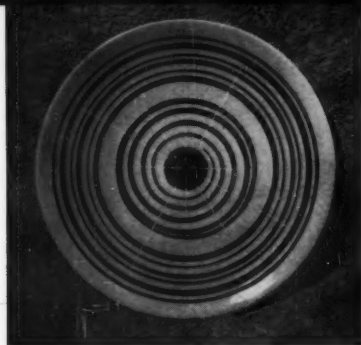


the underglaze
project



BANDING and SGRAFFITO

demonstrated by BEA MATNEY



Banding and sgraffito are decorating techniques in their own right. When the two are combined, a wide new field of decorating ideas is opened. Let's discuss each member of this decorating team individually. First, sgraffito.

SGRAFFITO means *scratch* and many interesting scratched decorations can be worked out with underglaze. The usual procedure is to paint on a coating of underglaze in a color which contrasts with the body. By scratching through the coating, you reveal the body beneath. The scratched lines or areas, therefore, form the decoration.

There is only one precaution to offer and that is not to allow the underglaze to become too thoroughly dried before scratching in the decoration. Commercially prepared underglazes dry to a hard and tough surface which is very difficult to incise. Have your sgraffito ideas well in mind so that you can apply them when the underglaze has set but before it is thoroughly dry.

Any pointed tool can be used for sgraffito. You will find by practicing and experimenting that different sizes and types of tools will give different line widths and textures.

THE BANDING TECHNIQUE was shown in the underglaze project in April. It is such a basic and useful technique, however, it is described again here. In the photo below, Mrs. Matney demonstrates banding on a plate. The left hand spins the wheel at a steady pace while the right hand, well braced, holds the brush in one position. As the plate turns beneath the brush, a smooth-line circle appears.

The armrest is of extreme importance. Here a tall jar is used, but any firm object of the proper height would do as well—a stack of books, a mold, a small box—just so it is firm and will support the hand at a comfortable height. The brush should be one that can hold a large quantity of underglaze and at the same time come to a fine point. Light pressure will give a fine line; added pressure spreads the brush and, therefore, thickens the line.

You can go over a band as many times as you like.

When the brush runs dry, refill it and go over the same line again if needed.

The identical setup can be used for shapes other than the flat plate. Vases and other tall pieces can be banded just as easily, although they may require a higher armrest so the hand is not forced into an awkward position.

For bands inside a piece such as the bowls shown here, the procedure is the same except that the brush is not touched down near the support as it is in the demonstration below. Instead, you reach across to the far side where you touch down and hold steady while the bowl turns and receives its band.

Remember, all the time you are banding, the fingers of the left hand slowly turn the banding wheel at a constant rate. The smoothly ground prepared underglazes work particularly well for banding. The decorator will find it quite simple to produce either a dry brush effect as in the bowl below or solid bands or spirals as in the plate above.

The bands can act as a background for the sgraffito or they can be opposed by the scratched lines. In the test plate above, for example, the outer bands and the center section of spirals (trace a pencil around them to see the difference) created a little too much activity. The thin sgraffito lines help slow down some of the movement without diverting too much attention to themselves.

In the bowl (left, below), a dry-brush band is background for a floral pattern. And in the more shallow bowl, (right), a very thin band surrounds a sgraffito pattern in a solid area, repeating the circle and helping to break up the wide white area.

Try banding and sgraffito, developing ideas of your own. Practice the proper position for banding shown here, using, if you like, water or ink on a sheet of paper taped to the banding wheel. And when you are banding in earnest with prepared underglazes, on a piece of green ware or bisque, remember to have the sgraffito decoration well planned so you can apply it before the underglaze becomes too hard for you to scratch through it. ●



HOW TO band is shown at left, with full details on banding-sgraffito combinations given

in the text. This is another article in a series aimed at the hobby decorator.



TAKE A STENCIL . . .

bowl by Eleanor Cottrell



. . . FROM NATURE

Readymade stencils for decorating ceramics are to be found in nature, especially in the graceful shapes of leaves and vines. Real English ivy and Christmas ferns served as stencils for the bowls shown here. The textured effect of the glaze was achieved by a special kind of spatter-spraying.

The process is demonstrated below. Fresh ferns are laid flat on the inside of a bowl, hugging the surface as closely as possible. Then the piece is spatter-glazed with a toothbrush and sieve (any mesh utensil will do as well). You dip the toothbrush in glaze, shake off excess, and draw the brush across the mesh. This produces the finely grained, uniform texture seen in the bowls above. The ferns are then lifted carefully from the surface. A cover glaze finishes off the piece.

Plant life that is firm in texture and bold in design is suitable for the technique. It should be rather flat; in fact, it's a good idea to press it a little before you use it. Use fresh material, if possible, because it is more flexible in this stage; it not only hugs the surface tighter but adjusts more easily to the shape of the piece.

Your sense of design is brought into play in arranging the stencils. (After all, we can't expect nature to do the *whole* job). A close look at the finished bowls, above, shows that leaves of the ivy and sections of the fern were plucked off the stencils to permit more rhythmic placement. The decoration should fit the form of the bowl.

A few pointers: this technique can be used on bisque but the stencils cling better to green ware. It is easier,

obviously, to work on plates or shallow bowls than on steep-sided pieces. For spattering the glaze, a spray gun or airbrush *could* be used if you can find a way to keep the stencils from being blown off. If you can, then a glancing or sputtering type of spray will give a textured or spattered effect, though not as fine a one as the toothbrush-and-sieve combination.

Underglazes, slips or glaze can be used; the cover glaze, however, should be one that lets the design show through clearly or semi-clearly. Color contrasts may be bold or subtle.

It's fun to press your favorite flora (or even certain fauna?) into service as stencils. And you also learn something about design because you want your decoration to be more than merely a rigid reproduction of nature. ●

Bowl with ferns as stencil is spattered for textured effect.

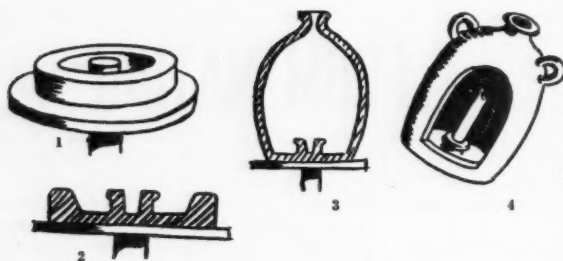


Stencil removed, the piece is to be covered with clear glaze.



Outdoor Candleholders

by MISKA F. PETERSHAM



REAR WINDOW. For those not-too-windy evenings, an opening on two sides will yield more light. Other variations are shown below.

Candleholders are fashioned with an eye to function. First of all, they must be high enough to accommodate a candle gracefully and have an open top of some kind to act as a chimney. And if they are to be used out of doors, you had better make allowance in the design for a natural windbreak, or your candle will go out with the first strong ripple of air.

My outdoor candleholders, including the holder itself, are thrown all-of-a-piece on the wheel. But they could as well be made by any of the hand-building methods such as coils or slabs, with a little pinch pot fastened by hand to the base serving as the holder. This, however, is the way I throw mine on the wheel:

1. After centering, the ball of clay is opened up in the usual way except that a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch lump is left in the bottom at the center.

2. Before the walls are raised, the centerpiece is opened—to about an inch at the top, smaller at the bottom. It stands about 1½-inches high.

3. Now the outer wall of the pot is raised and closed in to a small opening at the top. To accommodate the candle, the piece should be at least ten inches high.

4. After tooling has been completed, an opening is cut in the wall at one side.

Many shapes can become attractive and efficient candleholders as long as the requirements of height and top opening are met. With imagination, great variety can be achieved through the kind of side opening you make in the wall, and through decoration. In use, the candleholder's solid side is simply turned to the winds that blow.—Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



Combine Ceramics & Enamels

by KAY HARRISON



Copper enamels can be combined with ceramics in a whole new world of adventure! We might say that this is a logical development since many ceramists, particularly hobbyists, work with both enamels and clay. If you wonder what kind of results you will get, select a few copper enameled forms and arrange them on a fired ceramic piece. You will be pleasantly surprised with the delightful patterns a few discs, squares, or crescents can create. If, now, you are convinced that there are possibilities, start from scratch (literally), following through on the step-by-step instructions.

Select a piece of green ware, either cast or hand modeled, and either dry or leather hard, and arrange various copper shapes on the surface until you are satisfied with the design. Trace around each piece of copper with a sharp pointed tool or with a well sharpened pencil. Now remove the copper and scrape the inside of the sketched areas so that the copper will lie level with the surface of the clay when mounted. This is called countersinking or inseting.

If you work on dry green ware, be very careful not to press heavily when scraping out the clay because the piece can easily crack.

At this point you may wonder whether some allowance should be made for the firing shrinkage of the ceramic piece. In other words, might the scraped-out areas become too small to accommodate the copper pieces after the ceramic has been fired? The answer is no. The firing shrinkage is not great enough in most cases to exceed the ordinary pencil-width-space left when you traced around the copper piece. In my early experiments, when extra space was left to allow for shrinkage, the scraped area was too

large. Of course, if you have a high-shrinking clay, it would be well to make a shrinkage test just to be on the safe side.

The next step is to glaze and fire the ceramic; be sure, however, to leave the scraped areas unglazed. The bisque surface provides a better foothold for jewelry cement than does a glazed surface. There is no difficulty in keeping these areas unglazed if you brush on your glaze; however, if you prefer to spray or dip, the areas will have to be protected from the glaze.

For spraying, you could set the copper pieces in place (if they will stay) until you have finished glazing. Or you might cut paper or cardboard shapes and set them in place. Perhaps the easiest way would be to use wax resist or rubber resist (masks): paint the areas you want to remain unglazed with the resist material which will prevent the glaze from adhering to the clay surface. Nothing more need be done if wax resist is used because it burns out in the kiln. If you use the rubber mask it should be peeled off before firing.

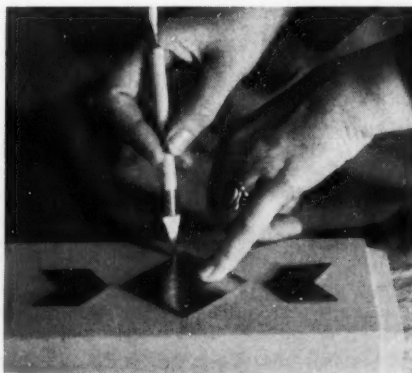
For the dipping or pouring method of glazing the use of resist materials is just about the only practical solution because stencils will not perform their function if dipped.

There should be no eyebrow raising (among the hobby potters) at this *one-fire* procedure. Although many hobbyists have been impressed with the idea that a ceramic piece must *always* be bisque fired before glazing, this is *not* the case. The procedure recommended above is not only feasible, but highly recommended. You can eliminate the cost and time of an additional firing, and a perfect glazing can be obtained with the "one-fire" glazes that are available.

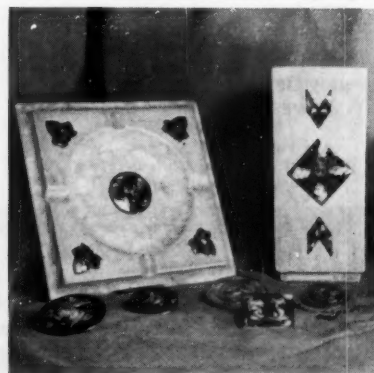
When the piece comes from the kiln, it is ready for the final touch; that is, inseting the enameled copper pieces. I use a moderately heavy covering of jeweler's cement on the bisque area, being careful not to get the cement too close to the edges. When the copper piece is pressed into place, some cement may ooze out around the edges; this should be wiped off immediately. Allow the pieces to lie flat until the cement is completely dry.

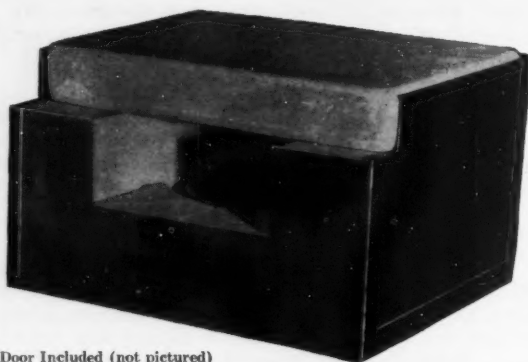
Pictured here are a few examples of enamel-ceramic combinations. In the realm of utility, plates are not too appropriate, although for purely decorative purposes they can be satisfactory. More appropriate, we have found, are vases, ash trays, boxes, and our favorite—lamp bases, one of which is used for the demonstration here.—The Kay Harrison Studios, Detroit, Mich.

INSETTING enamels in a lamp base is demonstrated below. The scraped areas are left un-



glazed the better to hold glued-in pieces. Other combination-ideas below and above.





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shrinkage test

Making your own tiles for a table top, plaque, or what-have you? If you want the finished tiles to fit snugly into space allotted for them, you will have to know beforehand exactly how much the clay will shrink so you will

know how much extra to allow for.

A simple test involving some simple arithmetic can give you the accurate answer. Here is the procedure.

Roll out a slab of clay about six or seven inches long and perhaps three inches wide. Down the center of this slab score, with a knife or pointer, a line about four or five inches long; then *measure the exact length*. Set the slab aside to dry *slowly* so that it will not warp and then fire it to your regular maturing temperature. After firing, take the exact measurement of the line once again. The clay has shrunk; the line, therefore, is shorter than it was originally.

Now, to find the *percentage shrinkage* of the clay, use the following mathematics: *original length minus fired length, divided by original length, times 100*, gives the per cent of shrinkage.

Follow through on the following practice shrinkage test to make sure you understand the principles involved. Assume the original line was exactly five inches long and after firing it measured 4½ inches in length. Setting these numbers up in the formula, we have five minus four and one half divided by five, times 100; this gives 10 per cent. It means that a tile, or any piece for that matter, would have to be 10 per cent larger, in all directions, in the plastic state if it is to be of specific dimensions after firing. In other words, if we wanted a group of tiles to be 3½ inches by 5½ inches after firing, the plastic tiles would have to be 10 per cent larger in each direction or 3.8 inches by 6.05 inches.

Remember that each clay and body will have a different amount of shrinkage; therefore, this shrinkage test should be worked up for each different clay or body.—Suggested by Robert Irwin, St. Louis, Mo.

rice pattern glaze

If you have ever tried to make *rice-pattern designs*—ware in which pierced decorations are filled with glaze—you know that not all glazes will work. If the glaze is too

fluid, it will run out of the holes instead of staying in place when fired to maturity. A high degree of translucency is also wanted so that the carved areas will show up and not be completely hidden as would be the case if an opaque glaze were used.

I found through experimentation that the glaze recipe given by Dorothy Perkins in her article on porcelain (April 1954) works very well for rice-pattern designs in porcelain. This is "Glaze F: Local Reduction Copper Red," and it appears on Page 28 of that issue.

I cut very small openings in the porcelain clay with dental tools while the piece is still damp but firm. When it is completely dry, I pack the holes with glaze that has been mixed with only enough water to form a thick paste. After scraping off excess glaze, I glaze the entire piece in the usual manner and fire. The holes remain filled with glaze through the firing and are translucent.

I believe it would be just as well, before glazing, to bisque the piece—perhaps at cone 05 or 04. It would then be less fragile and easier to work with.—Mrs. Ben Roth, Elyria, Ohio.

texture tricks

Here are a few bits of information on texture tricks which I would like to pass on. They involve anything or everything you can think of that can be clearly impressed into your well-wedged clay.

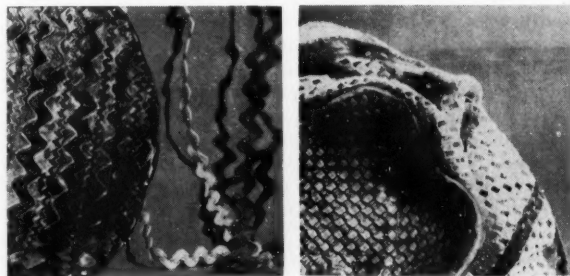
Try rick-rack braid (photo 1). All the same size widths of rick-rack can be used, or small and large sizes can be combined for a more interesting effect. The rick-rack must be well impressed into the clay. It may be removed before firing, or left on to be burned out in the bisque firing. I prefer to remove the braid (it can be used again), and to touch up any unclear spots in the clay.

Plastic cloth coasters and plastic place mats make good texture imprints. For small pieces, a part can be cut from the plastic to fit the desired size or design in mind. For large pieces, whole mats or halves can be used. Plastic doilies, too, can be cut easily to produce different designs; the whole doily or a section of it can be used to make numerous kinds of imprints.

Dishcloths provide a variety of textures (photo 2). Shop around for different kinds of weaves in cloths for special imprint effects. Inside and outside impressions can be made on the same clay object by using two cloths, one under and one over the clay.

In glazing these textured pieces, it is well to study a variety of colors and types of glazes. Opaque glazes usually cover up the imprints, although if used sparingly they can add to the texture quality. Some colors, the darker shades especially, cover up imprints. Usually a transparent glaze produces the best results, because even an overdose of glaze (an accident which often happens) will not obliterate the design but will, more likely, produce an interesting contrast in color. In applying the glazes, a combination of colors can also result in a nice final effect.

Texture tricks offer many exciting experiments which, more often than not, produce delightful ceramic pieces.—Violet Brown Shay, New Orleans, La.



WHERE'S YOUR BRIEF?

Many of the procedures you now consider routine may be new and helpful to others. If you benefit from the ideas of others, pay them back with ideas of your own. Many of your ideas will lend themselves to use as CM Briefs, so don't you dismiss them as being unacceptable: let us be the judge. Let the CM editors consider your glazing and decorating ideas, forming techniques, short cuts and how-to's. CM will pay you for each item accepted.

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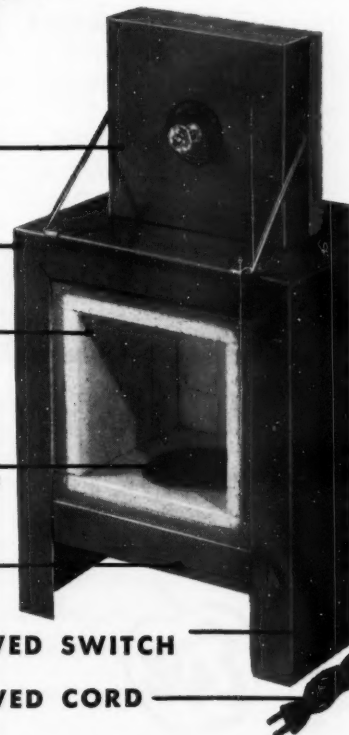
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Wheel Variations

(Begins on Page 16)

lines of the figure, the bottle was placed on its base at an angle. Again, balance was achieved by manipulating the angle of the foot. A sgraffito method of decoration was carried out after the handle was applied and after a red clay slip was sprayed over the surface of the pot.

As it dried, the neck of the pot twisted somewhat to the right. To further this slightly askew attitude the eyes of the woman were made also to look in that direction.

3. To begin to form the effect of a two-member, free-form pitcher (see page 17), the sides of a very wet, just-thrown, cylindrical pot (A) were pushed together to make a figure 8 in the top section (B). Where the sides touched each other, the clay was pressed firmly so that a double wall was partially formed. Two coils of clay were inserted (C) and worked into place at the inner ends of each curve to amplify the material in those portions. A spout was pulled out. When leather hard, the double-walled section was cut away (D) to allow the two members to stand free, and edges were shaped smooth through carving.

The design was applied with liquid wax. Next the piece was sprayed with a clay slip colored with 10 per cent of manganese dioxide. The wax set up a resistance to the wet slip, not allowing union with the wax-painted areas. Bisque firing burned away all evidence of the wax leaving a light-on-dark pattern. A semi-opaque white matt glaze intermixed with ilmenite was used in the glaze firing giving the effect of a white line and dot design against a light chocolate speckled background.

A variation of the larger pitcher, which when completed suggested a long-tailed fowl, was made in the form of a smaller, chicken-shaped cream pitcher (top, page 16). The method of construction closely followed that of the larger work. A resist device was again used for decoration with a yellow clay slip sprayed over an iron-oxide-colored clay. The glaze in this case was a simple glossy transparent enamel.

Another variation of the pinched top idea is a three-member possibility which starts with a clover-leaf fold (E, page 17). When the sections are separated at the double walls the three necks spring apart (F). Cylinders of different lengths and shapes (G) may be applied as extensions of the necks.



4. Undulating curves of a wheel-thrown bottle plus decorative illusion produce the female figure, shown from three sides. The bottle is functional but its sculptural nature is even more important to its creators.

4. With undulating curves but with no special sculptural treatment, a female figure was created out of a white porcelain clay bottle. Here the form was considered an entity, and the decorative illusion was created by design drawing in the form of sgraffito and bared areas scraped away from the iron-oxide slip which lay over the porcelain body. A transparent, ground-glass glaze was used which left decoration as crisp as it was on the bisqued pot. The photograph shows the several sides of the sixteen-inch-tall pot. Thought was given, of course, to the handleability of the object as a functional bottle, but its existence as an object of a special sculptural nature is perhaps even more important.

With a modicum of skill in the throwing and decorating arts, the potter can easily devise variations of the above sampling of devious forms or he can, as of course many do, invent his own playful fantasies.

It should be remembered, however, that aesthetic inventiveness need not constantly depend upon the unusual in form for satisfying interest. There is always the danger that the search for novelty for its own sake can become a road to mere freakishness. This kind of conscious striving, perhaps to tantalize the jaded appetites of aesthetes, cannot lead to solid achievement and can only be a blind alley for the potter. But when the artist has his wits about him, when he disdains the shocker or the ceramic freak, his forays into the wheel-thrown, free-form variation of pottery may well be healthy incentives to his development as a creative potter. •

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answers to questions

CONDUCTED BY KEN SMITH

Q. In a china-painting firing, what causes the bottom plate to break when one or two other plates are stacked on top of it? I use a slow firing in an 11-inch-diameter kiln. The plate (10-inch diameter) sits on stilts; the kiln is not vented or otherwise disturbed until it has returned to room temperature.

A. Small kilns heat quite rapidly and cool rapidly as well. You should leave the peephole open until near the end of the firing so that the kiln will not heat up too quickly. It would also help if you left the lid open just a crack.

A stack of three plates is one too many in such a small kiln. It doesn't allow enough circulation of heat. And a 10-inch plate fits too close to the elements in an 11-inch-diameter kiln. You might be able to get by with firing only one 10-inch plate at a time if it is stilted high enough so that it is in the space between the elements.

Q. Is it possible to make a speckled glaze from a smooth-colored commercial glaze?

A. It is easy to make your own speckled glazes by mixing any dry ceramic colorant into any glaze. For the colorant you can use dry underglaze color, concentrated underglaze or body stains, or pure oxides. All these are available from your local supply shop or through mail-order houses. These additives should be stirred into the glaze but not ball-milled (or otherwise ground in) because the latter produces a smooth color rather than the specks you desire.

Q. What temperature difference would you expect within an electric kiln about 3 x 3 x 4 feet inside dimensions; and also in a 2 x 2 1/2 x 3 foot gas-fired kiln?

A. Properly designed gas or electric kilns of the size you mention should fire within one cone difference in all parts. It would be easier, however, to obtain firings within this close limit in the electric kiln. The position of gas burners usually causes the immediate area to be hotter. With an electric kiln, the elements or heat source can be well distributed throughout for better heat distribution.

Q. We have been making copper-enamel earrings and have had trouble with lumps when trying to achieve a jewel effect. They fuse beautifully but several days later they snap off. Can you offer any suggestions?

A. Several suggestions might be helpful. First, be sure to counterenamel the piece. The extra thickness on the front of the piece can set up a strain which will make the chunks snap off. Also, use small chunks and fire them until they settle down and spread out a little. If the chunk is much thicker and heavier than the rest of the enamel, it will usually chip off. Use a lump of enamel which is of the same composition as the powdered enamel you are using. It might also be helpful to cover the entire piece, after the lump is fused, with a thin coat of clear enamel.

Questions of general interest are selected, out of the many received, for answer in this column. All other subscriber inquiries, however, are given individual attention. Direct yours to the Questions Editor, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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The Overglaze Page

by ZENA HOLST

Dry Dusting

Instructions were given, in the March issue of CM, on how to obtain solid colors by the ground laying method of dusting powdered mineral colors into an oiled surface. The effect was that of an opaque finish because of the composition of the oil base. It should not be confused with the dry-dusting method which I shall now explain. Dry dusting used in connection with naturalistic painting retains the translucency and at the same time gives intensity and depth to the colors due to the fact that the dusting is done over a dry painting. The dry dusting technique is appropriate only with naturalistic paintings.

There are times when this kind of dusting may be used to great advantage; in fact, experts in china painting who do a great deal of naturalistic decoration seldom finish a composition without a certain amount of dusting. This is done over small areas in a painting after it has dried and before it is fired. Great care must be taken with the technique because too many repeated dustings will cause the painting to look heavy. The usual procedure of several wet paintings and firings, in trying to obtain very dark shades and strong colors, does not always accomplish the desired result. This is especially true with the ruby, crimson, carmine and purple colors. The problem with a dark color is in retaining the translucency and at the same time showing depth in the reflections and shadows. A small amount of dry powdered mineral color dusted here and there over the painting will give a richness and strength in values, without fear of the blistering which often results from too heavy an application of wet color. Only by experience and the observation of results does one learn discretion in adding dry color to limited areas.

At least one firing and often two are eliminated by virtue of your being able to strengthen colors with dusting. This is a great advantage in the decorating of art bodies. The technique of dusting however, must not be overdone. It is seldom used over wide areas and never over the entire painting. It is confined usually to small

spots where a very deep shadow is desired, either in the petal or the center of a flower, part of a leaf, or a reflection in the background. The color used for dusting is not always the same hue as that used for the painting except when strong purity is desired, nor is it confined to a shade color. It is quite often a tone of the same hue. To overcome flatness in a background, it is sometimes an advantage to dust certain spots with a tint color to give a feeling of softness and an illusion of atmosphere. Dusting, whether tints, shades or tones are used, will give a three-dimensional effect to naturalistic painting.

Some of the combinations used are shading green over part of a yellow-green leaf, ruby over the darkest portion of a petal that has been painted with American Beauty, rose over pink, blue and lavender flushed into backgrounds, and much gray to soften a composition. Always to be remembered are the restrictions in the combinations of iron oxide pigments, as set forth in the rules for intermixing. Dusting is not always used to darken color, but often to soften harsh color or to blend one area over another, especially in a background where the shadows need to be thrown back, as with gray or orchid dusted over shading green. Again, the color of a flower is sometimes dusted into part of the shadow in the background or over a leaf to give the effect of a reflection. Both heightened color and a warm glow are achieved by flushing with the proper powder. For very dark red roses, purple pansies and red poppies, the same powder is used as for the painting.

The secret of success in adding dry mineral color is to make certain that the painting is entirely dry before doing any dusting. Wait at least a day or maybe longer, depending on the type of mixing medium you have used for the colors in the painting and how fast it dries. To those who paint with a heavy medium, I would say wait two days or more. Do not think that the painting will get too dry; it is surprising how much powder can be rubbed into the dry paint-

(Please turn to Page 36)

design details

The technique of incorporating bits of foil in enameling is described in full on pages 11-13. Below, additional details are given about the colors and methods used for the three enameled sets shown in the feature article.

Cuff Links and tie pin, page 12.



1. Application and firing procedure followed here was the same as for demonstration piece described in the text.

2. Opaque gray counterenamel; medium-value, opaque blue-gray on back and face; silver-foil bits laid in face; and transparent gray wet inlaid over face and back.

3. Black line was added for greater design interest. (Details on various types of lines will be given in subsequent articles.)

Earrings, top page 12.

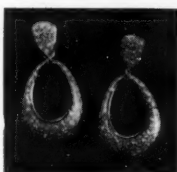
1. Opaque coral was used for counterenamel.

2. The front sifted with opaque coral and fired.

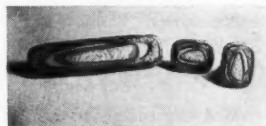
3. Gold-foil bits, spaced rather far apart, laid on the surface and annealed.

4. A transparent red sifted over-all and fired.

5. A second coat of the transparent red was sifted overall. The back side was also given a coat of this transparent red, with plenty of agar used. Both sides were fired at the same time. (It can be done in two firings if you have not had sufficient experience to handle both sides at one time.) This final firing was done at 1600°-1650°F, thus making some of the gold foil bubble up and either float in the enamel or actually hit the surface. It also made the coral burn out slightly around the edges, creating a handsome outlining of the piece in this "burned-brown" color.



Men's Set, page 13.



1. Counterenamel of opaque blue dusted on and fired.

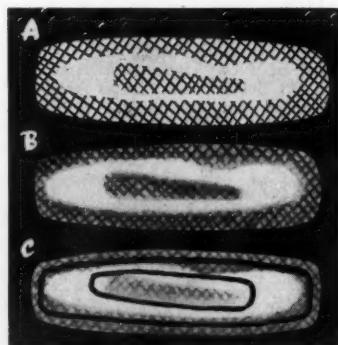
2. Medium-fusing flux dusted on the front and fired.

3. A design in silver-foil pieces (sketch A) laid on and annealed.

4. Three transparent colors were laid on (sketch B) using the wet inlay technique to give depth and richness as well as a level surface. Light gray was used in the center but allowed to extend beyond the foil, resulting in two colors and values. Then—a rim of varying widths, in flux, to give a little warmth to an otherwise completely cold color scheme. This does not follow the foil line, which gave the designer a chance to obtain two values and colors on the last inlaid

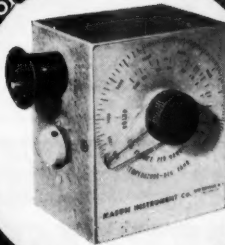
color, a dark blue which overlaps foil and flux. All of these were carefully leveled out and fired at one time.

5. The black line was put on as a final accent (sketch C) setting off the center particularly, almost as a precious stone is set off. It gives strength to a pattern which is undefined in other respects. (Types of lines are to be covered in subsequent articles.)



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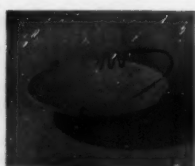
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Mix Your Own Glazes

(Begins on Page 14)

coating, as evenly as possible.

If you have problems, don't hesitate to reglaze and refire. Occasional defects such as pinholes and blisters often disappear in a second firing. Warm the glazed piece before adding new glaze. If the color is not even, apply further coats of the same glaze. If the color isn't just what you want, reglaze with another color. Use one glaze under or over another for various effects.

Gum Recipe: Add one quart cold water to 2 tablespoons gum tragacanth. *Do not stir.* Allow to stand for at least 12 hours, then beat smooth with egg beater. Pour into jar, and let stand for a day before using. Keep covered. Use in proportion of 1/4 cup gum solution to 1/2 cup frit. (Buy gum at drug store in small amounts). If gum is a commercial blend, follow manufacturer's instructions.

The recipes in the glaze chart are just to give you a start. Go on from there to dozens of colors and combinations, but be sure to test on sample pieces and keep careful notes of results.

In very general terms, liquid underglaze colors give an even tone, more or less opaque, while oxides give a speckled effect due to lack of grinding. Copper makes greens and blue-greens. Iron makes various shades of brown, as does manganese. Chromium makes an opaque green. Zircopax makes a

glaze opaque, and titanium is used mainly for its crystalline effect. The results depend not only on the oxides, but on the clay body, the other glaze ingredients, the method of application and firing, as well as on other factors, so you'll have to experiment.

There'll come a time when some of you will want to try glazes which demand more exact preparation. You'll be going on to bigger and better things. Perhaps first of all you'll want a 100-mesh sieve (about \$5) to replace the stocking strainer. (Then add 1/4 cup zinc oxide to some of your L glaze recipes. Force wet glaze mixture through sieve twice. Some wonderful semi-matt glazes can be obtained this way.) If you're of the "grind-well" school, you'll want a mortar and pestle (priced \$2 up).

And you'll begin to try to make sense out of technical articles and books. You'll add a little flint or more kaolin to a glaze that flows too much; and experiment with less kaolin, or additional lead or another flux, to help make a glaze mature at a lower temperature. You'll see the possibilities of overcoming crawling and crackling, pinholes and blisters by chemical additions and subtractions. Then you may want scales (about \$20 and up) to enable you to weigh out exact amounts for your own or others' formulas. A small ball mill will be next on your list.

Working out glazes is a fascinating side of ceramics, even for the amateur, so try your luck. ●

Itinerary

(Begins on Page 6)

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PENNSYLVANIA, East Stroudsburg

July 29-31

Annual State Craft Fair of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College, preceded by one-day Seminar.

OHIO, Cleveland

through June 12

37th Annual May Show of arts and crafts at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

OREGON, Portland

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Sixth Annual Northwest Ceramics exhibition at Oregon Ceramic Studio, 3934 S. W. Corbett Ave.

TENNESSEE, Chattanooga

June 9-30

Dutch Arts and Crafts; 350 examples including ceramics, lamps, etc. At George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art.



Throwing Tips

by TOM SELLERS



Cutting Wires and Lifters

The casual mention of "cutting wire and metal lifters" in the March throwing article, "Making a Pitcher," generated a number of questions from novice potters. Such questions as why one sometimes throws directly on the wheel head and at other times on a tile or bat, and how cutting wires and lifters are made, I shall try to answer here.

Naturally everyone has his own preferred ways of working. I prefer to throw directly on the wheel head because it is quicker and, for me, easier. Attaching a tile or plaster bat to the wheel takes time and I use the bat only when the shape demands it: a widely flaring pot, for example, couldn't be cut from the wheel head without being distorted. On the other hand, cylinders, bottles, and flared pots reinforced with thick rims can be moved while soft without danger. These I throw directly on the wheel head.

In the learning process the beginner will find it advisable to throw on the wheel head rather than on a bat. Very often he concentrates so hard trying to center that he can easily tear a bat loose.

The cutting wire can be made from any thin, flexible, sturdy wire or cord. In this category fall stainless steel fishing leader, nylon line, piano wire, violin strings, etc. To provide a good grip at each end, attach small lengths of dowel rod, drapery rings, or coat hanger wire.

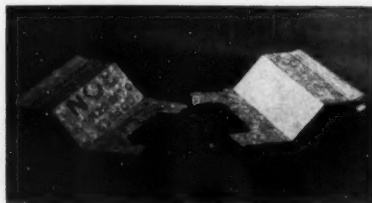
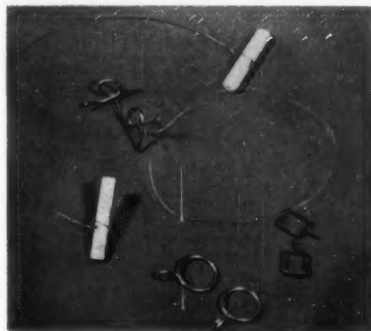
For lifters, any sturdy metal which will not bend under the weight of the pot being lifted will do. The pair illus-



trated here is made from galvanized metal, which has the special advantage of not rusting. Note the shape and the rolled back for easy handling and gripping.

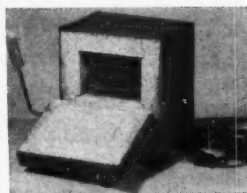
In use, the cutting wire is laid on the dampened wheel head on the far side of the pot, and stretched taut. The wheel is then turned slowly and the wire pulled straight toward you through the base of the pot. I usually repeat the process. Then the lifters are dampened and gently pushed under the pot from each end as far as they will go without forcing. While they are held firmly, the wheel is turned slowly and they easily slide in the rest of the way. With the pot well seated, it is moved to a bat and the lifters gently pulled out. One lifter sometimes sticks; if you push with one finger at the base of the pot as you pull the lifter, it will slide out without stretching or otherwise distorting the pot.

Drapery rings, dowels, or heavy wire provide hand grips for cutting wires, which can be made from nylon line or piano wire, to mention but two. Lifters are cut and fashioned from metal sturdy enough to hold a pot.



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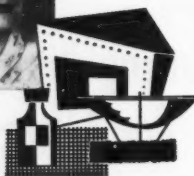
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Enameling on Metal

by JEAN O'HARA



Effects & Defects

EFFECT: Separation

Separation enamel is a commercial preparation which looks much like black overglaze, and it is applied in the same way (by brush, after thorough stirring.) The difference is this: when fired at above normal temperatures (1600-1650-1700°F.) for a good period of time, say approximately 4 minutes, separation enamel sinks into the previously applied enamel coats,



and spreads. This area is then lower than the original surface, and the color revealed is a combination of all the colors applied. As you would gather, separation enamel is most effective when applied to a piece which has at least two separate coats of two different colors already fired on the surface. The piece may be coated, for example, with flux and fired; then coated with another transparent and fired, lines are then drawn in with separation enamel, and the whole given a high firing. The technique works best when used with layers of two to three transparent; or, perhaps, with one opaque, such as white, as the base coat, and one or two transparents on top of this.

When painting a design with separation enamel, remember that the black line as such will be lost, so it is not necessary to be careful about the precision of the line as you would have to be in the application of regular black overglaze. A bold and simple design is the most effective one after firing, since the line grows or spreads so much. Groupings of many delicate lines are lost in firing.

Because the piece must be fired long and high, it is well to have a

good coat of counterenamel on the back, preferably one of the harder colors (none of the soft opaque blacks, whites, reds, soft fluxes, etc.), or a sludge mixture in which hard colors predominate. Make sure also to have a good coat of enamel at the edges of both the back and front of the piece.

Separation enamel will work on any kind of form, but a form with slightly steep sides gives the enamel more chance to move, which is what is wanted in this case. As with slush crackle, the effect depends for interest on pleasing color combinations. The piece can be further elaborated, if desired, with detail in opaque colors fired at normal temperatures because such firings will not disturb the pattern created by the separation enamel.

DEFECT: Cloudiness, Chipping, and Bare Metal

There are three defects appearing in this piece. On the right side an unwashed, transparent enamel was applied in too thin a coat. The result was pits open to the metal which firescaled in the kiln.

On the left the enamel was applied very heavily. The back of the test piece was not counterenameled and the strain of the heavy coat on the front caused the enamel to crack and



chip. The piece was not dropped or hit at any time. This same thing may happen on a counterenameled piece if the counterenamel is much thinner than the front coat.

Notice the cloudiness of the unwashed, transparent enamel. This is particularly evident on the left where the enamel was applied heavily.

SHOW TIME

TENTH DECORATIVE

ARTS AND CERAMICS

AT WICHITA

Six of the 14 awards made at the recent Tenth Decorative Arts and Ceramics Exhibition at Wichita went to ceramics; and all but one of the six went to ceramics by Californians. Their prize-winning pieces are shown on this page. Robert Turner of Alfred, N. Y., was the other ceramist who took an award, his covered jar (not shown) winning the \$50 Second Prize for Ceramics.

Strongest and best represented media among the 1800 or more entries from 38 states and Hawaii were pottery and textiles, according to the jury. "Here, tradition and experimentation dominated in well-balanced results," they said. Sculpture (ceramic and wood) and garden sculpture did not fare as well, no entries warranting prizes in the judges' opinion. Although one award, each, was made in jewelry, silversmithing and enamels, the entries in general were said to sacrifice meaningfulness for originality.

The jury—Karl Drerup, enamelist; Mrs. Azalea Thorp, weaver; and Peter Voulkos, ceramist—selected 225 pieces for the month-long exhibition held at the gallery of the Wichita Art Association, sponsor of the annual event. Recognizing the Kansas organization's decade of effort in behalf of fine workmanship, the judges emphasized the fitness of having such a show in the heart of America—"not only in terms of geography but also in terms of our cultural development."



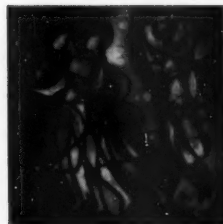
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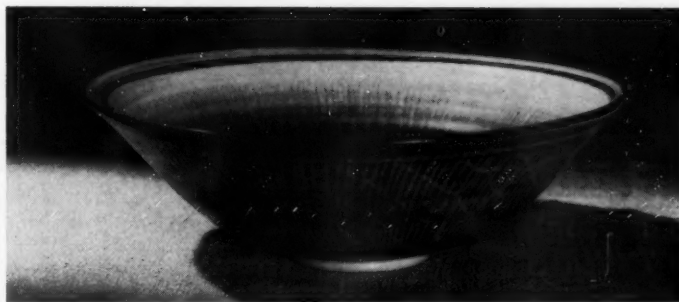
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3



4



5

Double winner in ceramics was Paul Soldner, Los Angeles—\$50 Purchase Prize (1) and \$100 First Prize (2). A.A.U.W. Purchase Award went to Paul C. Volchening, Oakland (3).

Arthur Ames, Claremont, was first in enamels, \$100, with "Night Still Life" (4); Purchase Prize in Any Medium, \$100, went to Antonio Prieto, Oakland, for his bowl (5).

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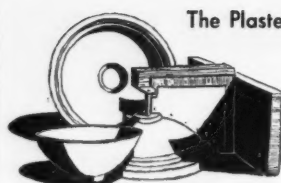
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models and molds PIN TEMPLATE METHOD

PART 3. FORMING PLASTER MODEL

Using the pin template, the author shows, here, how the model is formed from soft plaster.—Ed.

CLAY PACKING AND PLASTER COVERING: Clay is put around the pin to save on the amount of plaster to be used and the time it takes to build up the model. A lubricant such as *stearine* (dissolve 1 part stearic acid in 4 parts kerosene in top of double boiler or over very low heat) is brushed on the baseboard and on the underside of the sled to permit smoother movement and to keep plas-



ter from sticking to these parts. Then a *slow mix* of plaster, which has reached the point where it will begin to stay somewhat in position, is ladled over the clay packing. The sled *may* be removed from the board during this operation, as long as it is replaced and revolved while the plaster is soft.

FORMING MODEL: The sled is moved around, with the metal template leading and pushing excess



plaster ahead of it. If the excess plaster is agitated with the hand, directly ahead of the template as it is revolved, holes and irregularities fill in faster.

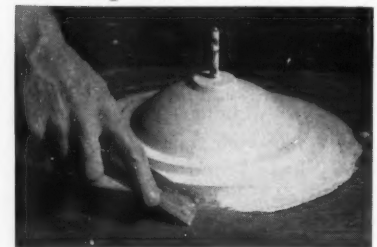
NEARING FULL FORM: The sled may be picked up at any time, lifting excess plaster which may then be cleaned off the template. The sled is removed by lifting it from the back so that the template is raised from the form; then the unit is lifted off the

pin. In replacing, the pin guide is



always set on the pin first, before the sled is lowered into position.

CLEANING BOARD: The baseboard and sliding surface of the sled must



be cleaned frequently of excess plaster, and recoated with *stearine*.

FINAL PLASTER RUN: If the plaster mix becomes too hard to use in finishing the form, a small extra mix may be needed. This mix is used while still quite fluid because the first mix will pull water from the new one, making it set quite quickly once it is put on the form. If the second mix is necessary, it should be prepared and used as soon as possible; otherwise, expansion of the first mix may raise the sled from the board, actually changing the shape of the model.

CLEANING PIN: Dried, excess plaster is removed from the pin so that



the model can be taken off to be cleaned and finished.

To be continued next month.

ceram-activities

people, places & things

MEET OUR AUTHORS:

... That Jo Rebert (page 11) became an enamelist is the baby's fault—in a way. This is how it happened. Just a few years ago, finding herself with family duties, limited space and the creative urge, Jo turned from painting (her first love and requiring complete concentration) to pottery. "But as soon as I'd get my hands covered with clay, the baby would need emergency attention. I spent all my time washing my hands instead of making pots. And besides, clay lacked the element which appeals to me most—color. Enameling is a good stop-and-go medium, and requires less working area. So I bought a kiln, set up a very compact and complete working unit, and have been enameling steadily ever since."

Actually, the course of Jo Rebert (nee Liefeld) has been charted among the arts and crafts since high school days when she won a city-wide contest which sent her to art school at Detroit. Later, she turned to piano as a way of making a living (solo playing in night clubs, teaching and writing—three instruction books and two solos of hers have been published). But painting was the

medium she preferred and practiced whenever she could free herself from wage-earning (prize-winner, too). This preference is probably the real reason she took enameling to heart when she was casting about for a medium that could be accommodated to home-making more satisfactorily than either painting or potting.

"Enameling is the only craft I have found that is so closely related to painting as to feel like one and the same thing. It can have the qualities of either oil or water plus being more versatile than either. It's practical and useful—you can make everything from compacts to table tops to actual paintings!"

The Reberts are in Columbus, O., temporarily (he is working toward a Ph.D., degree in chemical engineering at The Ohio State University). Jo enamels, paints, exhibits in regional shows, teaches a painting class at the local art school, raises two children—and prepares the jewelry enameling series for CM.

... F. Carlton Ball, potter, and Aaron Bohrod, painter, are congenial though only occasional collaborators in ceramics (see

their "Variations on Wheel-Thrown Pottery," this issue.) Since 1950, they have been getting together periodically for a potting session, Ball doing the throwing, Bohrod the decorating (CM, May-June, 1953). The procedure is apt to alternate: sometimes the potter throws the shape and the decoration develops accordingly; another time, Bohrod plays the tune, making decorative sketches which, in turn, suggest the form to Ball.

Each man has respect for the ability the other brings to their unique ceramic combination. Says the painter of the potter: "He



F. Carlton Ball



Aaron Bohrod

... can enthusiastically participate in the production of works which, while distinct from the pottery he creates under his separate signature, bear not the mark of a split personality but of special integrated and combined personality." And the potter rates the painter-turned-decorator highly. "He has the ability to adjust his techniques to the material. His decoration is sensitive to the form neither destroying the shape nor setting up conflict (Please turn to Page 34)

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ARTS & CRAFTS

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Ceram-Activities

(Begins on Page 33)

between surface and form."

Bohrod believes that, while you can be deadly serious about standards of beauty, pottery can still be a playful lighthearted art. "I feel that almost anything goes, if the pot goes with it . . ." He adventures in ceramics only as a sideline, however. Most of the time he is the well-known painter (one-man show in New York recently) and designer and Artist-in-Residence at the University of Wisconsin.

Ball, you might say, is currently all over the place. Head of the ceramics department at Southern Illinois University, he is now winding up a year's leave (Ford Foundation Fellowship) during which he has worked at Alfred, New Orleans and other ceramic centers. Pottery with the Ball-and-Bohrod signature is on the go, too, one of their pieces (shown bottom of page 17) being in the traveling section of the Ceramic National, others selling from a New York gallery. The collaborators hope to catch up with each other long enough this summer for another round in the pot shop.

. . . Children love clay—this is the premise that Elaine Pear Cohen practically lives by and certainly acts on (see her article, CM, May). When her son was five, she started classes at his age level, in her own home, and continued them until he was ten. Next year, her daughter having reached five, an-

other long-term class will be underway. At present (the family has temporarily abandoned their Upper Darby, Pa., home in favor of Albany, Calif., while Mr. C., a professor, is on sabbatical leave), Mrs. Cohen is writing not one but two books about clay—one for parents and one for kids.

Ceramics, she feels, is a noble calling. "After all, when archaeologists dig deep into the earth for remnants of ancient civilizations, what do they find? Pottery and sculpture . . . This is the element which has really endured. For scientists and historians, it has been the most important key to understanding the past. So . . . we are maintaining a skill of great dignity and historical importance. This is something to be genuinely proud of . . ."

The young woman came to ceramics after art training at Bennington College, and at least a dozen additional courses with various artists and sculptors.

ONE FOR ALL: An idea for getting the membership working and learning at the same time comes from the **Navesink River Ceramic Guild** (New Jersey.) They choose a single, common motif or theme as a decorating project; then each member proceeds to interpret it in his own fashion. Taking an ivy leaf as the motif and a plain plate as the form, for example, they created an astonishing variety of designs in slip-trailing, sgraffito, mishima, underglaze, overglaze, etc. More recently, they worked on rice bowls with the decorative theme specified only as

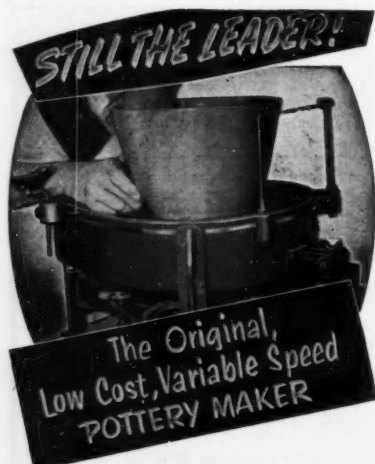
Chinese. At their annual show, the Guild's Mrs. William Champlin reports, visitors pick out the interpretations they like best and also marvel at how many different ways a single idea can be expressed.

DENVER SHOW-SALE:

. . . Some forty members of the **Colorado Society of Ceramists**, pleased with the success of their first exhibit-sale of members' work, plan a repeat for next year, according to Member **Helen B. Davis**. With three hundred items on hand (only a portion of which show



in the photo), the first sale was held late last winter, for three days, in The Studio Shop, a small Denver gallery.



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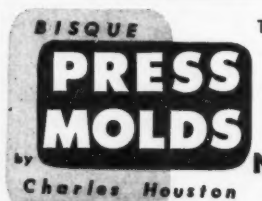
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Ceram-Activities (con't.)

NOR RAIN NOR SLEET: Foul weather didn't stop fifty enamelists, half of them from other states, from traveling to watch **Kathe Berl**,



the New York enamelist (CM, April), demonstrate techniques at a recent one-day seminar at State Teachers College, Willimantic, Conn. Sharing the limelight with **Roland Nadeau**, Oneida Silver Company designer, K. B.'s theme was expanded use of enamels in three-dimensional and other currently unexploited forms. Program was arranged by **Henry Pasco** of Hartford for the **Society of Connecticut Craftsmen** in conjunction with the New England Craft Council.

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STUDIOS NOTE: New directory listings to begin with the July issue accepted up to the 15th of June.

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Overglaze Page

(Begins on Page 26)

ed surface. If the painting is not dull looking, it is not dry enough to dust. A shiny painting is too oily and will receive too much powder, resulting in a mottled and very rough effect.

For applying, the dry color, which has been thoroughly ground to smoothness on the grinding palette, is picked up, a bit at a time, and rubbed into the chosen area. The powder must be controlled and confined to each area where needed, and it is applied with whatever tool is best for that specific area. Sometimes a small sable brush is best, but at other times it is more convenient to use a toothpick with cotton wrapped on the end. The choice depends on the size and shape of the area to be dusted, and on whether a sharp outline is to be retained or a soft blending is to be accomplished. The powder must be rubbed in thoroughly so that surplus may be burned off, care being taken not to scratch the surface of the painting underneath. Continue to apply small amounts until the painted area will not receive any more powder (a light dusting when not smoothed out will only fire in unevenness and ruin the painting). When two or more colors are used in different areas care must be taken in brushing off the surplus powder. Of course, if the painting is entirely dry, as it should be, no powder will settle except where it is rubbed in. Use your large dusting brush or a soft ball of cotton for removing surplus powder. Make sure to remove every loose grain of pigment. The trick in dry dusting is to be able to rub in plenty of color for a smooth finish without disturbing the painting.

No piece of china of large size such as a lamp can be properly finished with a naturalistic design without a certain amount of color being added by *Dry Dusting*.

THE HOLST NOTEBOOK

* What do you use for relief white in the centers of flowers, such as pansies and forget-me-nots, to simulate the fuzz?

I prefer the relief white put up in powder form. It should be mixed with the same medium recommended for raised paste for gold, also be prepared on the palette in identically the same manner. Do not eliminate the "breathing-on" process because this gives a tacky body to the paste so that it will stay in relief. In class lessons, students learn to "huff" and "puff" while mixing relief paste. Refer to the January issue of CM for explicit instructions on the preparation of raised paste and then use the same rules for mixing relief white. This white is often used to highlight white flowers in a decorative design.

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June, 1955

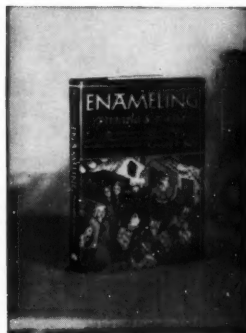
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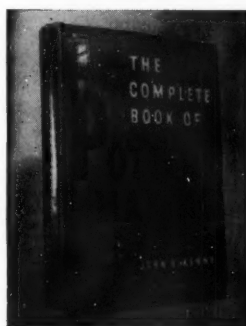


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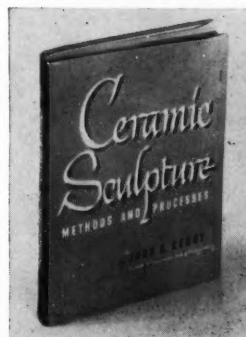


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